

Baby seal slaughter: Canada's shame

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Why do Canadians allow this? Two Newfoundlanders flee cameras after a kill



The needless slaughter of baby seals in Newfoundland every year is a national embarrassment and disgrace.

Canadian politicians have been incapable of ending this primitive practice – the largest killing of marine mammals in the world – even as damage to the country's reputation, some businesses and the image of the 2010 Olympics grows.

Animal-rights activists have elicited condemnations from the U.S. Senate, President Barack Obama and the European Union which just imposed a ban on seal imports. Ottawa is appealing the ban to the World Trade Organization at a cost of taxpayers of \$10 million. This waste to backstop an unjustifiable and puny business of \$1 million a year.

The battle to save the babies escalates as Canadian leaders renege

The Human Society of the United States, and global affiliates, are now promoting the boycott of all Canadian seafood.

“Why seafood? Because seal hunting is an off-season activity conducted by fishers from Canada's East Coast,” reads the Society's website. “They earn a small fraction of their incomes from sealing—primarily from the sale of seal pelts to European fashion markets. But the vast majority of the sealers' incomes are from commercial fisheries. Canadian seafood exports to the United States contribute US\$2.4 billion annually to the Canadian economy—dwarfing the few million dollars [estimated \$1 million this year] provided by the seal hunt. The connection between the commercial fishing industry and the seal hunt in Canada gives consumers all over the world the power to end this cruel and brutal slaughter. [Click here to learn more.](#)”

More ammo against Canada for doing nothing

Another group, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), is targeting the Olympics.

“Every year, the Canadian government allows sealers to beat and skin hundreds of thousands of seals, many of whom are only weeks old. These baby seals are shot or bludgeoned to death. Veterinarians and Fisheries and Oceans Canada officers have found that the young seals' skulls are often not adequately crushed, which can lead to a prolonged death,” reads its website.

A year ago, the group approached U.S. Airways to plaster its airplanes with the “Olympic Shame” message. The airline rejected the proposal.

In January, it unveiled a violent parody of the Vancouver 2010 Inukshuk logo, battering a blood-soaked baby seal. In June, it unveiled a campaign portraying the Vancouver Games mascots – Miga, Quatchi and Sumi – as savage seal killers.

This week, PETA approached the Vancouver Olympic Committee to buy some of its surplus billboard, noting that it is having difficulty selling advertising space in the Lower Mainland. It pledged to buy \$38 million worth of space, but the recession has meant \$12-million remains unsold.

This will be rejected by the committee which will become an issue around the world. And it's all unnecessary.

Ottawa should outlaw this slaughter immediately. Canada is not some third-world nation and Newfoundland is now a rich province which can afford to clean up its act. Even abattoirs are required to euthanize painlessly which makes this abuse intolerable to anyone who understands it. A poll would reveal strong disapproval in Canada. Canadians should demand a ban against all seal hunting. Politicians should take note.